

## **What is supervision?**

Supervision on a 1-1 or group basis is the formal opportunity for coaches working with clients to share, in confidence, their case load activity to gain insight, support and direction for themselves and thereby enabling them to better work in the service of their clients.

As a coach you have the professional capacity to help bring about important changes for individuals, groups and organisations, however your work can also deeply influence people who are in a life-changing situation or transition and who may be rendered vulnerable and possibly dependent.

Coaches need supervision and increasingly corporate clients and procurement specialists are making evidence of regular supervision part of their quality assurance process. A supervisor is a more experienced coach who:

- Helps you benchmark your practice against best practice
- Works through ethical dilemmas with you
- Brings a perspective about the quality of the coaching practice

Coaching supervision draws on the best practice of psychotherapy and counselling supervision and places it within a coaching orientation. As such, it upholds the principles of coaching and mentoring and the coaching relationship.

## **What does a supervisor do?**

This is not a checklist or mandatory set of areas to cover, but may well include:

- Clear Contracting and creating a working alliance, including help with multi-party contracting where appropriate
- Establishing good boundaries
- Enhancing reflection when working with content and process
- Attending to the coach's personal development; opening up new areas of competence for the coach
- Deepening coaching presence
- Building the coach's internal supervisor
- Offering new perspectives to the coach
- Increasing the coach's range of interventions and tools
- Being sensitive to the coach's learning style
- Knowing about coaching psychology
- Working with Parallel Process
- Giving constructive feedback
- Offering experiments and applications through which the coach can learn
- Working systemically – with the coach, the client and the wider field
- Ensuring that standards and ethics are maintained

## **How does a coach gauge the quality of a supervisor?**

AOCS members are all trained and experienced in coaching supervision, some are accredited in addition, and all subscribe to a code of ethics and hold professional indemnity insurance. They retain membership of their own professional body and actively maintain their CPD. AOCS cannot provide endorsements or recommendations, but suggest you set up a short trial period with a new supervisor to see if you're compatible - just as coaches do with their clients.

As a further guide to Coach Supervisor requirements:

- Significant training and experience in supervision (although some may also be training or newly-qualified)
- In touch with developments in the field of coaching and with current coach training
- Knowledge of corporate life and organisational systems, and to the ability to 'read' organisations
- Psychological theory especially as it relates to professional life and relationships
- Sensitivity to the coach's situation
- Ability to work with different coaching and learning styles
- Adopt ethical and professional standards
- Be in regular supervision themselves

## **How to choose a Supervisor**

### **Supervision: a collaborative conversation that offers reflection, insight and support to coaches**

Below are some guidelines that will help you to choose a Coach Supervisor. Checking these points below is important to ensure that you find a supervisor who will truly enhance your practice, but it is also very important that you feel comfortable with the supervisor - comfortable enough to have a conversation in which all areas of your work can be safely explored and in which you can develop, personally and professionally.

### **Suggested Coach Supervisor requirements:**

- Significant training and experience in supervision (although some may also be training to be supervisors or be newly-qualified)
- In touch with developments the field of coaching and with current coaching training
- Knowledge of corporate life and organisational systems, and to the ability to 'read' organisations
- Psychological theory especially as it relates to professional life and relationships
- Sensitivity to the coach's situation
- Ability to work with different coaching styles
- Highest ethical and professional standards
- Be personally supervised themselves
- Several years practice as coach or coach mentor (although some be may be newly-trained)
- Knowledge of a wide range of coaching skills

### **This additional information may support your choice:**

#### **Core tasks of supervision may include:**

- Clear contracting – plus help with multi-party contracting, where appropriate
- Establishing good boundaries
- Enhancing reflectivity – working with content and process
- Attending to the coach's personal development
- Creating the working alliance

- Deepening coaching presence
- Building the internal supervisor
- Offering new perspectives to the coach
- Teaching and developing meta-skills
- Increasing the coach's interventions and tools
- Being sensitive to the coach's learning style
- Knowing about coaching psychology
- Working with Parallel Process
- Giving constructive feedback
- Creating experiments through which the coach can learn
- Offering educative and restorative support to the coach
- Working systemically – with coach, client and the wider field
- Ensuring that standards and ethics are maintained
- Opening up new areas of competence for the coach

Courtesy of Miriam Orriss, CSA